



Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus
Carlos Kalmar, Principal Conductor
Christopher Bell, Chorus Director

Chopin Piano Concerto No. 2

Wednesday, June 29, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA

Carlos Kalmar, *Conductor*

Juho Pohjonen, *Piano*

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV	<i>Antar</i> , Symphonic Suite, Op. 9 Largo — Allegro giocoso Allegro Allegro risoluto alla Marcia Allegretto vivace
CHOPIN	Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21 Maestoso Larghetto Allegro vivace JUHO POHJONEN
ROUSE	<i>Thunderstuck</i>

This concert is supported in part by the Walter E. Heller Foundation,
given in memory of Alyce DeCosta.

The appearance of Juho Pohjonen is partially underwritten
by Jeannette and Jerry Goldstone.

Piano provided by Steinway Piano Galleries of Chicago.

Tonight's concert is being broadcast live on 98.7 WFMT
and streamed live on wfmt.com.



JUHO POHJONEN, one of the brightest instrumental talents to emerge from Finland, has given recitals in Hong Kong, Dresden, Hamburg, Helsinki, London, New York, San Francisco, Vancouver, Warsaw and at the Lucerne Piano, Savonlinna and Bergen festivals, and performed with such leading orchestras as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Philharmonia Orchestra, Danish National, Finnish Radio Symphony, Swedish Radio Symphony, Helsinki Philharmonic, and Lahti Symphony, with whom he toured Japan. He was selected by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln

Center as one of fourteen musicians to join the "CMS Two Residency Program for Outstanding Young Artists" between 2009 and 2012, and continues to perform with CMSLC. Mr. Pohjonen's debut recording features Scandinavian composer Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's Piano Concerto, "Plateaux," with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and his solo piano piece *For Piano*. His sensational opening recital at 2010's Music@Menlo Festival led to a recording for the Music@Menlo Live 2010 series entitled *Maps and Legends: Disc 8*, with works by Mozart, Grieg and Handel. Juho Pohjonen was selected by András Schiff as the winner of the 2009 Klavier Festival Ruhr Scholarship. His additional distinctions include First Prize at the 2004 Nordic Piano Competition (Nyborg, Denmark), First Prize at the International Young Artists 2000 Concerto Competition (Stockholm), Prokofiev Prize at the AXA Dublin International Piano Competition 2003, and prize winner at the Helsinki International Maj Lind Piano Competition 2002. Mr. Pohjonen studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki with Meri Louhos and Hui-Ying Liu at the Sibelius Academy, and has participated in master classes of such renowned pianists as Leon Fleisher, Jacob Lateiner and Barry Douglas.

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ANTAR, SYMPHONIC SUITE, OP. 9 (1867-1868) **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)**

Antar is scored for piccolo, two flutes, oboe, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings. The performance time is 29 minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed this work on July 15, 1953, with Nicolai Malko conducting.

Rimsky-Korsakov was only 22 and recently returned from a voyage around the world as a Russian naval cadet when he began *Antar* in 1867. It was Mili Balakirev, the ideologue of the cadre of Russian nationalist composers known as "The Five," who suggested that his colleague consider the subject of Sennkovsky's fantasy tale based on the legend of *Antar*, the 6th-century Arabian warrior-poet whose verses were so revered by Islam that they were displayed in the religion's sacred shrine at Mecca. When the work was completed in 1868, Rimsky dubbed it his *Second Symphony*, but later admitted, "I was wrong in calling *Antar* a 'symphony.' It is a poem, suite, fairy-tale, story or anything you like, but not a symphony. Its structure in four separate movements was all that made it approach a symphony. It has no thematic development whatsoever, only variations and paraphrases." It was not until 1903, during the last of the score's revisions (which had previously been reworked in 1876 and 1897), that the composer finally settled on calling *Antar* a "symphonic suite."

The score of *Antar*, the first work to demonstrate fully the scope of Rimsky-Korsakov's talents as orchestral colorist and musical storyteller, is prefaced by an introduction that tells the story which inspired the music:

"I. The grandeur of the desert of Sham; the magnificence of the ruins of Palmyra. *Antar* has forever abandoned the society of his fellow men, because they only returned evil for the good which he wished to do them. He has fled to the ruins of Palmyra in the desert of Sham, vowing eternal hatred toward them. Suddenly a graceful gazelle appears. *Antar* wishes to set off in pursuit, but a terrible noise rends the air and the light of day is hidden by a thick shadow: it is that of a gigantic bird chasing the gazelle. *Antar* attacks the monster bird, striking it with his lance. Uttering a loud cry, the bird flies away and the gazelle disappears. *Antar*, once more alone, falls asleep. In a dream, he sees himself transported to a splendid palace; slaves press round to serve him and a melodious song charms his ear. He is in the dwelling place of the Queen of Palmyra, the fairy Gul-Nazar. It is she in the form of a gazelle whom he has saved from the clutches of the spirit of darkness. The grateful Fairy promises *Antar* the fullest delights of life. The vision vanishes, and the hero awakes amongst the ruins. II. The joy of vengeance: this is the first pleasure bestowed upon *Antar*. III. The joy of power is the second gift of the Fairy. IV. *Antar* has returned to the ruins of Palmyra. At last, he is to taste the joy of love. In the arms of the Fairy herself, intoxicated with rapture, he dies in a last embrace."

The opening movement of Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic suite portrays the episodes of the story, while the last three limn the delights of the poet's reward. The work is unified by a musical theme identified with *Antar*, a bold but slightly melancholy motive, introduced by violas shortly after the piece begins, that appears in every movement. The later movements are enlivened by a selection of melodies that the composer borrowed from a French collection of Arabian music from Algiers. Enfolded within the rambling discussion of *Antar* that occupies several pages in Rimsky-Korsakov's memoirs (which he kept current until 1906, just two years before

his death) is the composer's estimation of his composition, the earliest of his music regularly heard in the concert hall: "When I examine the structure of *Antar* now, after the lapse of many years, I can affirm that I did well with this form, exclusive of outside influences and hints. If the form of Movement I flows from the form of the very narrative, the tasks of depicting the joys of revenge, power and love, on the contrary, are purely lyrical tasks calling for no fixed form: they merely denote moods and their changes, and thus allow complete freedom of musical structure. Where I got, at the time, this coherence and logic of structure, this knack of inventing new formal devices, it is hard to explain; but now that I examine the form of *Antar* with an experienced eye, I cannot help feeling considerable satisfaction."



PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN F MINOR, OP. 21 (1829)

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 is scored for pairs of woodwinds, two horns, two trumpets, bass trombone, timpani and strings. The performance time is 32 minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed this Concerto on August 17, 1949, with Nicolai Malko conducting. Wanda Paul was the solo pianist.

During his student days at the Warsaw Conservatory in the late 1820s, Chopin met a comely young singer named Constantia Gladowska and for the first time in his life, fell in love. In his biography of the composer, Casimir Wierzynski wrote, "She was considered one of the school's best pupils, and also said to be one of the prettiest. Her regular, full face, framed in blond hair, was an epitome of youth, health and vigor, and her beauty was conspicuous in the Conservatory chorus. The young lady, conscious of her charms, was distinguished by ambition and diligence in her studies. She dreamed of becoming an opera singer..." Chopin followed Constantia to her performances and caught glimpses of her when she appeared at the theater or in church, but he never approached her. His love manifested itself in giddily immature ways. He raved about Constantia's virtues to his friends. He invited one Mrs. Beyer to dinner simply because her given name was the same as that of his beloved. He reported "tingling with pleasure" whenever he saw a handkerchief embowered with her name. He broke off one of his letters abruptly with the syllable "Con —," explaining, "No, I cannot complete her name, my hand is too unworthy." After yet another half year of such maudlin goings-on, Chopin finally met — actually talked with — Constantia in April 1830. She was pleasant to him and they became friends, but he was never convinced that she fully returned his love. She took part in his farewell concert in Warsaw on October 11th before he headed west to seek his fame and fortune (he settled in Paris and never returned to Poland), and he kept up a correspondence with her for a while through an intermediary. (He felt it improper to write directly to a young woman without her parents' permission.) Her marriage to a Warsaw merchant in 1832 caused him intense but impermanent grief, which soon evaporated in the glittering social whirl of Paris. The emotional rush of young love Chopin experienced over Constantia played a seminal role in the two piano concertos he wrote in 1829 and 1830, works full of melody and ardent emotionalism.

Chopin based his concertos on the Romantic piano style of Hummel, Kalkbrenner, Field and Ries rather than on the weightier abstract forms of Beethoven. The orchestra in these virtuoso works is, truly, accompaniment, and is virtually excluded from the musical argument once the pianist enters. The center of attention is the soloist, and it says much about the quality of Chopin's writing for the piano that his concertos

continue to be heard while literally shelves-full of their contemporary creations have not been displayed for well over a century. In the opening movement of the Second Concerto, most of the orchestra's participation occurs in the introduction, in which are presented the main theme (a rather dolorous tune with dotted rhythms played immediately by violins) and the second theme, a brighter strain given by woodwinds led by the oboe. The piano enters and, with the exception of orchestral interludes surrounding the development section and the concluding coda, dominates the remainder of the movement.

Liszt thought the second movement "of a perfection almost ideal; its expression, now radiant with light, now full of tender pathos." Robert Schumann — writer, publisher, editor as well as composer — mused, "What are ten editorial crowns compared to one such *Adagio* as that of the Second Concerto!" Composed under the spell of his first love, this movement was a special favorite of Chopin himself. A description of the movement's form — three-part (A–B–A) with wide-ranging harmonic excursions in the center section — is too clinical to convey the moonlit poetry and intimate intensity of this beautiful music. In both its technique and its tender emotionalism, it breathes the rarefied air of Chopin's greatest works.

Chopin's biographer Frederick Niecks noted the finale's "feminine softness and rounded contours, its graceful, gyrating, dance-like motions, its sprightliness and frolicsomeness." The theme was inspired by the mazurka, the Polish national dance that also served Chopin as the basis for more than fifty stylized compositions for solo piano. The movement brims with dazzling virtuosity. Its structure comprises a series of episodes rounded off by the return of the beguiling main theme and a cheerful coda in F major heralded by a call from the solo horn.



THUNDERSTUCK (2013) **Christopher Rouse (born in 1949)**

Thunderstuck is scored for piccolo, two flutes, three oboes, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings. The performance time is 9 minutes. This is the work's first performance by the Grant Park Orchestra.

Christopher Rouse, a native of Baltimore, was largely self-taught in music before entering the Oberlin Conservatory in 1967 to study composition with Richard Hoffmann and Randolph Coleman; he received his bachelor's degree from Oberlin in 1971. Following two years of private study with George Crumb in Philadelphia, he enrolled at Cornell University, where his teachers included Karel Husa and Robert Palmer. He graduated from Cornell in 1977 with both master's and doctoral degrees, and a year later joined the faculty of the School of Music of the University of Michigan. Rouse taught at the Eastman School of Music from 1981 to 2002, and has been on the composition faculty of the Juilliard School since 1997. From 1986 to 1989, he served as Composer-in-Residence with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra; at the invitation of Leonard Bernstein, he was Composer-in-Residence at the 1989 Santa Cecilia and Schleswig-Holstein festivals. He has since held residencies at the Tanglewood Music Festival (1996), Helsinki Biennale (1997), Pacific Music Festival (1998), Aspen Music Festival (annually since 1999), Pittsburgh Symphony (2004-2005) and Phoenix Symphony (2006-2007); he was Composer-in-Residence with the New York Philharmonic from 2012 to 2015. In addition to his activities as a composer and teacher, Christopher Rouse is also active as a rock historian and as a writer on various musical subjects whose articles

have appeared in *Stereo Review*, *Symphony Magazine*, *Music Library Association Notes* and elsewhere. He is author of *William Schuman Documentary*, published jointly by Theodore Presser and G. Schirmer, Inc.

Rouse has received commissions from such distinguished ensembles and patrons as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony and Detroit Symphony. Among his many distinctions are the 1993 Pulitzer Prize in Music (for the Trombone Concerto), 2002 Grammy for Best Classical Contemporary Composition (*Concert de Gaudí* for guitarist Sharon Isbin), three BMI/SCA Awards, American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Music, Rockefeller Chamber Works Award, Friedheim Award of Kennedy Center, grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Warner Brothers, American Music Center, Guggenheim Foundation and Pitney-Bowes, and honorary doctorates from Oberlin College and the State University of New York at Geneseo; in 2002, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2009, he was named "Composer of the Year" by *Musical America* magazine.

Rouse composed *Thunderstuck* in 2014 for the New York Philharmonic as part of his three-year residency with that ensemble; Alan Gilbert conducted the premiere on October 9, 2015. The composer wrote, "*Thunderstuck* is a nine-minute concert opener that reflects my continuing love of the popular music of my younger years. Rock music has had an influence on several of my works, but none more so than this one. Near the end, there is an obvious reference to Jay Ferguson's 1978 hit *Thunder Island*, and this helps give the piece its title. This is a work meant to be engaging and fun — sometimes I feel that a little more 'fun' at classical music concerts would be all to the good."

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